



## BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 2, 2021

#### ***Employee Committed Bid Tampering in City of Fort Lauderdale and CRA's Selection of Holiday Lighting Vendor***

Broward Inspector General John W. Scott announced today that the Broward Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a [final report](#) concluding that City of Fort Lauderdale CRA Coordinator Thomasina Turner-Diggs engaged in bid tampering and other crimes when she attempted to direct a city contract for holiday display lighting services to vendor South Florida Lighting Team, LLC, doing business as Miami Christmas Lights (MCL).

Following its receipt of the OIG preliminary report, the city informed Ms. Turner-Diggs of its intent to terminate her employment, and the city no longer employs her.

The OIG investigation uncovered that Ms. Turner-Diggs, on behalf of the city but without its knowledge or authorization, agreed to pay MCL for holiday display lighting services for the city and CRA's 2016 Light Up Sistrunk event. She did so during a meeting with MCL's sales representative M. Randy Meyerson, where she signed MCL's estimate form agreeing to pay \$51,450.50. At the same meeting, Mr. Meyerson provided Ms. Turner-Diggs with two fabricated, higher quotes from purportedly competing vendors for her use in processing the procurement. He created these quotes with her knowledge, in her presence, and on her office computer.

As the city's procurement code required procurements of over \$25,000 to be conducted through a formal, sealed bid process, Ms. Turner-Diggs later had Mr. Meyerson split MCL's \$51,450.50 quote into two, smaller quotes to maintain control of the procurement. She then had the CRA process a requisition for the city to purchase the holiday lighting services from MCL using one of the broken-down quotes Mr. Meyerson provided her in the amount of \$22,950.00, along with the two higher, fabricated quotes that Mr. Meyerson had previously created.

The city discovered the fraudulent nature of the two competing quotes and ultimately procured MCL's holiday lighting services through a formal, sealed bid process, despite the fraudulent conduct that occurred and without alerting the city commission. Nonetheless, Ms. Turner-Diggs's attempt to direct the contract to MCL constituted criminal violations of bid tampering, a second-degree felony; criminal use of public records, a third-degree felony; and falsifying records, a first-degree misdemeanor. She also misused her public position in violation of the State Ethics Code.

The OIG is referring the matter to the Broward State Attorney and the Florida Commission on Ethics for whatever action those agencies deem appropriate, and the city pledged to cooperate should those agencies take further action.

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John W. Scott, *Inspector General*

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